

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans, is balancing on a thin wooden tightrope. She is holding a book in her right hand and a laptop computer in her left hand. The background is a bright, cloudy sky. The title 'Bridging the Gap' is written in a large, serif font on the left side of the page.

Bridging the Gap

GED Recipients Make Transition to College
By Lisa Lambert, M.A. '05

For some, taking the steps from obtaining a General Education Development (GED) diploma to enrolling in college courses can be akin to stepping onto a tightrope suspended over a gaping chasm of uncertainty.

Now, the Ohio Literacy Resource Center's GED Scholars Initiative has supplemented its already successful offerings with a new program to bridge the gap — both metaphorical and literal — between the receipt of one diploma and the pursuit of the next. Through funding from the Dominion Foundation, the Bridge Program offers financial and mentoring assistance to Kent State students who hold GED diplomas.

While high school graduates have access to post-secondary education guidance and recruitment activities, many GED graduates may not have the same opportunities. The

Bridge Program, says **Marty Ropog**, director of the Ohio Literacy Resource Center, was developed to address those inequities.

"The Bridge Program aims to provide academic support and a network of social support to GED graduates," she says. "The program works to give GED Scholars the same advantages as other students."

The program, now in its second year, helps potential students manage the college enrollment process, from application to choice of major. The pilot class of 17 students attended workshops including pre-application orientation, study strategies, paper and essay test writing, technology use and navigating the university system. Potential students were paired with Kent State GED Scholars with similar academic interests.

A number of community partners, including Six District Educational Compact, Ravenna Even Start and Maplewood Area Joint Vocational School, provided GED preparation instruction and transitioned college-bound students to

the Bridge Program, lending to the success of the effort in its first year.

Brian White, '04, a former GED Scholar and current director of the GED Scholars Initiative, says plans are underway to expand the Bridge Program to additional Kent State campuses.

As part of its overall scope of work, the Ohio Literacy Resource Center, in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services, provides support, resources and assistance to adult and family literacy programs and practitioners. Since June 2002, 26 participants of the GED Scholars Initiative have earned undergraduate degrees from Kent State.

Rod F. Dammeyer, '62, and wife, Diane, recently gave \$100,000 in scholarship support to benefit GED Scholar program students. A former member of the Kent State University Foundation Board of Directors and 1999 recipient of the College of Business Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award, Dammeyer currently is president of C.A.C. llc, a private company offering capital investment and management advisory services.

For more information and to read a recent student success story, visit www.kent.edu/magazine. 🌟